



A STUDY ON GENDER DISPARITY AND LITERACY RATE IN RELATION TO POPULATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Murshidabad enjoyed a rich history in terms of trade, industry, agriculture, politics, education, and culture during a protracted span of the ancient and medieval periods. Currently, however, the district stands far behind other regions of the nation in terms of socioeconomic, cultural, and educational characteristics. Murshidabad District's general collapse started with the fall of Nawabi rules during the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Bengali Muslims who had previously held political and socioeconomic sway in the region lost both with the arrival of British administration. This place's population lacks awareness because of the educational system's backwardness. In the district, women participate at a far lower rate than males do, both in terms of economic activity and literacy. Expanding women's access to education is necessary to improve their situation.

KEYWORDS: Gender Disparity, Literacy Rate, Demographic Issues, Socio-Economic-Culture

INTRODUCTION

Murshidabad is one of the districts in the state of West Bengal. Throughout a long period of ancient and medieval times, Murshidabad had a glorious existence in terms of agriculture, industry, trade, education, culture and politics. But at present the district lags far behind from other parts of the country in Socio-economic, cultural and educational aspects. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757 the decline of Nawabi rules began the overall decline of Murshidabad District. With the establishment of British rule in Bengal the Muslim ruling community not only lost its political power but also lost its socio- economic power in this area. With the introduction of modern Western education during British rule the country's long established Arabic Persian education system began to deteriorate. As a result of the deterioration of the Arabic-Persian based Islamic education system, the entire Muslim society gradually fell behind in the field of education. The fall of the Nawabi regime in Murshidabad resulted in the secession of government aid to the Makhtabs and Madrasas, the main education centers of Muslim at that time. As a result those education centers become important. Thus with the deterioration of the education system, the entire Muslim community here began to fall behind. As the Muslim community is the majority in Murshidabad district, the decline of the Muslim community has led to overall backwardness of the entire area. Due to the deterioration of the overall education system the condition of the women's education system is not good at all. Due to the weakness of women's education, women tend to fall behind as a whole. Only, due to the weakness of the education system, the whole district had been gradually backward for a long time. Murshidabad District Census HandBook, District Statistical Information and other sources show the backwardness here.

Statement of Problem

Under the above backdrop, the problem of the present study has

been selected as "A Study on Gender Disparity and Literacy Rate in Relation to Population with Special Reference to Murshidabad District of West Bengal, India".

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To discuss about the distribution of gender ratio and population growth of Murshidabad district;
2. To analyse the distribution of population according to religion of Murshidabad district;
3. To point out the gender ratio according to locality;
4. To enumerate the literacy rate in population of Murshidabad district;
5. To deal with literacy rate according to locality;
6. To compare the literacy rate in Murshidabad district with West Bengal and India as a whole

METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in nature. It has been enriched by using secondary data as far as practicable. Apart from this, several books and journals have been followed to substantiate the study.

Discussion of the Study

A Picture of Gender Ratio of Murshidabad District

According to the Census 2011, report of the Government of India, the total population of Murshidabad district in the state of West Bengal is 7103807 out of which 3627564 are males while 3476243 are females. As per 2011 census report, there were 1570759 families residing in Murshidabad district. The average sex ratio of Murshidabad district is 958. That is 958 females out of 1000 males.

Table No 1: Distribution of Population and Sex Ratio in the District of Murshidabad (2001 and 2011 Census)

Particulars	2011	2001
Total Population	7103807	5866569
Male	36 27564	3005000
Female	3476243	2861569
Sex Ratio	958	952
Population Growth	21.09%	23.76%
Population Density	1334 per sq/km	1102 per sq/km

Source: Census of India, (2001 and 2011)

According to the information in Table no - 1 A comparison between the 2001 and 2011 census reports shows that the population increased to 1237238 in 2011. According to the census 2001, the total population was 5866569 out of which 3005000 were males and 2861569 were females. The sex ratio was 952 females out of 1000 males and the population growth rate was 23.76% . As per Census 2011 report the total population of the Murshidabad district was 7103807 of which 3627564 were males and 3476243 were females. The sex ratio was 958 females, per 1000 males , and population growth rate was 21.09%. As the population increased by 1237238 people in 2011, the population density has also increased in this district. In 2001, the population density of Murshidabad was 1102 people per sq km. On the other hand, the population density has increased to 1334 people per sq km. in 2011. As a result, the population of the district has been steadily increasing.

Table No 2: Percentage of Population by Religion in the District of Murshidabad

Religious Communities	As Percentage of Total Population of the District in 2011
Hindus	33.21%
Muslims	66.27%
Christians	0.25%
Sikhs	0.01%
Buddhists	0.01%
Jains	0.04%
Others	0.21%

Source: Census of India, 2011

According to the census 2011, Murshidabad district have a Hindu population of 33.21% of the total population and 66.27% of Muslim communities. In addition, Christians are 0.25%, Sikhs are 0.01%, Buddhists are 0.01%, Jains are 0.04% and other religious communities are 0.21% of the total population. According to the census data, it can be said that Murshidabad district has the largest population of the Muslim in minority community. With the exception of Hindus (33.21%), the number of other religious communities is negligible.

Table No 3: Distribution of Gender or Sex Ratio of the Murshidabad district, West Bengal and India

Particulars	Murshidabad	West Bengal	India
Total Gender Ratio (Adult)	958	950	940
Gender Ratio in Rural Areas	955	953	946
Gender Ratio in Urban Areas	974	944	929
Total Child Gender Ratio (0 -6 Age)	968	956	919

Source: Census of India, 2011

As per census report 2011, (table no 3) the gender ratio of West Bengal and Murshidabad district are 950 and 958 (female per 1000 male people) respectively. The number is 0.8% higher than the gender ratio of West Bengal. Meanwhile, India's gender ratio is 940, as per census 2011, report. In other words, the gender ratio of Murshidabad district is 1.8% higher than the average gender ratio of India. As per data of table no 5, the sex ratio of children in Murshidabad district from 0 to 6 years is 968 (Females per 1000 males children). The sex ratio of children (0 to 6 years age) in West Bengal and India are 956 and 919 respectively (female per 1000 male children). Analyzing the sex ratio of children, it is seen that the sex ratio of children in Murshidabad district is 1.2% and 4.9% higher than that of West Bengal and India. respectively.

The Literacy Rate of Murshidabad District: An Explorative Analysis

Murshidabad is one of the most backward district in West Bengal. Considering the 2011 Census report, it is seen that Murshidabad is lagging far behind in the field of education as well. The Total literacy rate in Murshidabad district is 66.59%, with West Bengal having average literacy rate of 70.54% and India having a literacy rate of 72.98%. The female literacy rate in Murshidabad district is 63.09%, in comparison West Bengal and India have average female literacy rates of 70.54% and 64.43% respectively. The female average literacy rate of Murshidabad is slightly lower than India's average female literacy rate, but about 7.45% lower than West Bengal's. Although Murshidabad district is ahead in terms of population density, it is lagging far behind in Literacy. The district as a whole is lagging behind due to its backwardness in education.

Table No 4: Male-Female Literacy Rate in the District of Murshidabad, State of West Bengal and India.

Area	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Murshidabad	66.59	69.95	63.09
West Bengal	76.26	81.69	70.54
India	72.98	80.90	65.43

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table No 5: Male-Female Literacy rate in Rural and Urban Areas In Murshidabad District.

Area	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Rural	65.30	68.42	62.18
Urban	71.23	76.23	67.47

Source : Census of India, 2011.

A comparison of the average literacy rate in rural and urban areas of Murshidabad shows that the average literacy rate in rural areas is 65.30% and in urban areas it is 71.80%. In rural areas of the district, male literacy rate is 68.42% and the female literacy rate is 62.18%. Male and female literacy rates in urban areas are 76.23% and 67.47% respectively. The difference between male and female literacy rates in rural areas is about 6.24 percent. On the other hand, in urban areas the difference between male female literacy rate is about 8.76 percent. Therefore, it is seen that there is a large difference in the literacy rate of men and women in the rural and urban areas of Murshidabad. The backwardness of girls in education can be noticed in both, rural and urban areas of this district. The literacy rate of women in rural areas is about 5.29 percent lower than in urban areas. Due to this backwardness in the field of education, women in the rural areas of Murshidabad district are being deprived in various ways.

Table No 6: The distribution of Male- Female Literacy Rate in the District of Murshidabad, West Bengal and India in Rural and Urban Areas.

Area	Rural			Urban		
	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Murshidabad	65.30	68.42	62.18	71.85	76.23	67.47
West Bengal	72.13	78.44	65.51	84.78	88.37	80.98
India	66.71	77.15	57.93	84.11	88.76	79.11

Source: Census of India, 2011

According to the census data of 2011, given in table no 6, comparing the average literacy rate of rural areas of Murshidabad district with West Bengal shows that where the average literacy rate in West Bengal is 72.13% the average literacy rate in Murshidabad is 65.30%. That is about 6.83% less than West Bengal. The average literacy rate in Murshidabad is about 1.41% lower than in rural India. In rural India, where the literacy rate is 66.71%, Murshidabad has an average literacy rate of 65.30 per cent. There is also a more difference in the literacy rate of male and females. In rural Murshidabad, where male literacy rate is 68.42%, West Bengal and India have average literacy rates of 78.44% and 77.15% respectively. The average literacy rate of women in rural areas of Murshidabad is 62.18% and in rural areas of West Bengal it is 65.51%. However, the average literacy rate of women in rural India is 57.93%.

In this regard the analysis shows that the average literacy rate of women in rural Murshidabad is 4.25% higher than the average

literacy rate of women in India. The difference in literacy rate can be noticed in urban areas as well as in rural areas. The average literacy rate in the urban areas of the district of Murshidabad is 71.85%, compared to 84.78% and 84.11% in the urban areas of West Bengal and India respectively. In other words the literacy rate in urban areas is 12.93% and 12.26% lower than in West Bengal and India respectively, in urban areas of Murshidabad. The male literacy rate in urban areas of Murshidabad district, West Bengal and India are 76.23%, 88.37% and 88.76% respectively. The Murshidabad district lags behind in male literacy at 12.14% and 12.35% in West Bengal and India respectively. The literacy rate of women in urban areas of Murshidabad district is 67.47%. However, the literacy rate of women in urban areas of West Bengal and India is 80.98% and 79.11% respectively. Therefore, Murshidabad lags behind West Bengal and India in female literacy at 13.51% and 11.64% in the same respect.

CONCLUSION

Based on the census data of 2011 and other secondary data, we have come to some conclusions by analyzing all the information we have received about Murshidabad district. According to the census report of 2011, Murshidabad is a densely populated district. The population density here is 1334 per sq km. and the gender ratio is 958 females per 1000 males. Murshidabad district has the highest population of Muslim community. The district, 66% of the total population are Muslim and the Hindu community are 33 per cent. Moreover, the total Christians, Buddhists, Jains and the people from other communities have only 0.52 per cent. The majority of the Muslim Community in education and culture of the district, due to its backwardness, has lagged behind the district as a whole. In terms of literacy, Murshidabad district lags behind the state of West Bengal and the country. West Bengal and India have average literacy rates of 72.87% and 66.71% respectively, while Murshidabad has an average literacy rate of 65.30%.

Policy Suggestions

- For the development of women's education, new primary and secondary schools and colleges for girls should be established in different parts of the district and girls should be made aware and given the opportunity to enroll in these educational institutions.
- Only a modern and proper education system can be able to remove all the weaknesses of the women and empower them.
- When a woman becomes educated and empowers not only her family but the entire society as well as the country can become developed and empowered. So it can be said that education is the only way which can improve not only women's but the entire society and the country.
- So, awareness of education is the only way to achieve women's empowerment, and the overall improvement of the Murshidabad district will be possible through women empowerment.

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